



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS  
GREG ABBOTT

October 10, 2012

Ms. Sara Hoglund, CPPB  
Contract Administrator  
Collin County  
2300 Bloomdale Road, Suite 3160  
McKinney, Texas 75071

OR2012-16214

Dear Ms. Hoglund:

You ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under the Public Information Act (the "Act"), chapter 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID# 467548.

Collin County (the "county") received a request for the competitor bids for bid number 07336-10, Services: Post Employment Benefit Irrevocable Trust. Although you take no position on whether the submitted information is excepted from disclosure, you state release of this information may implicate the proprietary interests of The Frost National Bank, The PFM Group, Public Agency Retirement Services, and Wells Fargo Institutional Asset Advisors. *See* Gov't Code § 552.305(d); *see also* Open Records Decision No. 542 (1990) (determining statutory predecessor to section 552.305 permits governmental body to rely on interested third party to raise and explain applicability of exception to disclosure under Act in certain circumstances). We have reviewed the submitted information.

Initially, we must address the county's obligations under the Act. Section 552.301 of the Government Code describes the procedural obligations placed on a governmental body that receives a written request for information it wishes to withhold. Pursuant to section 552.301(b) of the Government Code, the governmental body must request a ruling from this office and state the exceptions to disclosure that apply within ten business days after receiving the request. *See* Gov't Code § 552.301(b). In this instance, the county received the request for information on July 18, 2012. Accordingly, the county's ten-business-day deadline was August 1, 2012. The envelope in which the county submitted its request for a ruling request bears a postmark of August 3, 2012. *See id.* § 552.308

(providing ten-day requirement met if request bears post office cancellation mark indicating time within ten-day period). Thus, we find the county failed to comply with the requirements of section 552.301.

Pursuant to section 552.302 of the Government Code, a governmental body's failure to comply with the requirements of section 552.301 results in the legal presumption the requested information is public and must be released, unless a compelling reason exists to withhold the information from disclosure. *See id.* § 552.302; *Simmons v. Kuzmich*, 166 S.W.3d 342, 350 (Tex. App.—Fort Worth 2005, no pet.); *Hancock v. State Bd. of Ins.*, 797 S.W.2d 379, 381-82 (Tex. App.—Austin 1990, no writ) (governmental body must make compelling demonstration to overcome presumption of openness pursuant to statutory predecessor to section 552.302); *see also* Open Records Decision No. 630 (1994). Generally, a compelling reason to withhold information exists where some other source of law makes the information confidential or where third party interests are at stake. Open Records Decision No. 150 at 2 (1977). Because third party interests can provide compelling reasons to withhold information, we will consider whether the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under the Act.

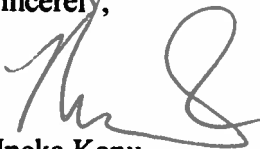
We note that an interested party is allowed ten business days after the date of its receipt of the governmental body's notice to submit its reasons, if any, as to why information relating to that party should not be released. *See* Gov't Code § 552.305(d)(2)(B). As of the date of this decision, we have not received correspondence from any of the interested third parties. Thus, none of these interested third parties has demonstrated that it has a protected proprietary interest in any of the submitted information. *See id.* § 552.110(a)-(b); Open Records Decision Nos. 661 at 5-6 (1999) (to prevent disclosure of commercial or financial information, party must show by specific factual evidence, not conclusory or generalized allegations, that release of requested information would cause that party substantial competitive harm), 552 at 5 (1990) (party must establish *prima facie* case that information is trade secret), 542 at 3. Accordingly, the county may not withhold the submitted information on the basis of any proprietary interests these third parties may have in the information.

We note some of the submitted information may be protected by copyright. A custodian of public records must comply with the copyright law and is not required to furnish copies of records that are copyrighted. Open Records Decision No. 180 at 3 (1977). A governmental body must allow inspection of copyrighted materials unless an exception applies to the information. *Id.*; *see* Open Records Decision No. 109 (1975). If a member of the public wishes to make copies of copyrighted materials, the person must do so unassisted by the governmental body. In making copies, the member of the public assumes the duty of compliance with the copyright law and the risk of a copyright infringement suit. As no exceptions to disclosure have been raised, the submitted information must be released, but any information protected by copyright may only be released in accordance with copyright law.

This letter ruling is limited to the particular information at issue in this request and limited to the facts as presented to us; therefore, this ruling must not be relied upon as a previous determination regarding any other information or any other circumstances.

This ruling triggers important deadlines regarding the rights and responsibilities of the governmental body and of the requestor. For more information concerning those rights and responsibilities, please visit our website at [http://www.oag.state.tx.us/open/index\\_orl.php](http://www.oag.state.tx.us/open/index_orl.php), or call the Office of the Attorney General's Open Government Hotline, toll free, at (877) 673-6839. Questions concerning the allowable charges for providing public information under the Act must be directed to the Cost Rules Administrator of the Office of the Attorney General, toll free, at (888) 672-6787.

Sincerely,



Nneka Kanu  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

NK/bhf

Ref: ID# 467548

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)

Mr. Mark Freeman  
Executive Vice President  
The Frost National Bank  
100 West Houston Street  
San Antonio, Texas 78205  
(w/o enclosures)

Mr. Jeff Johnson  
Vice President  
Wells Fargo Institutional Asset Advisors  
1740 Broadway  
Denver, Colorado 80274  
(w/o enclosures)

Mr. Jim Link  
Managing Director, PFM Advisors  
The PFM Group  
700 Lavaca, Suite 1500  
Austin, Texas 78071  
(w/o enclosures)

Mr. Mitch Barker  
Executive Vice President  
Public Agency Retirement Services  
4350 Von Karman Avenue, Suite 100  
Newport Beach, California 92660  
(w/o enclosures)